

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF

POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART

Fifth Series

ESTABLISHED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS, 1832

No. 707.—VOL. XIV.

SATURDAY, JULY 17, 1897.

PRICE 1½d.

THE MOTHER OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

A GENTLE, kindly lady has passed away somewhat suddenly ; and one to whom she was ever most friendly would fain lay a stone on the cairn which will be erected by many in affectionate, sorrowing remembrance of Mrs Stevenson.

Edinburgh in especial mourns her loss. In its immediate neighbourhood she passed her early years, her father, the Rev. Dr Balfour, being minister of the parish of Colinton. 'The Mause' afterwards became what has been truly called 'the much-loved second home of Robert Louis Stevenson in his childhood. It was his holiday-house and his convalescent hospital.' In one of his charming papers in 'Memories and Portraits' he gives us a graphic portrait of his grandfather and his surroundings, in the cherished spot so tenderly imprinted on the tenacious, youthful memory. In Edinburgh Mrs Stevenson spent her happy married life ; here her husband died ; here she returned from a distant land a widowed mother, mourning over the loss of her only son, to dwell among us for too sadly brief a time, and then to fall asleep.

How vivid is the remembrance of the happy home in Heriot Row !—the kindly, clever head of the house ; the bright, pleasant wife and mother ; and the fragile, imaginative boy who was afterwards to become so famous. We used to wonder how any two of the three could exist if the third were called away, each seemed so necessary to all !

The death of the husband and father caused the first break in the little circle, and most sincerely was he mourned by the two survivors. In his later years Mr Stevenson had the happiness of seeing his only child honoured and admired in no ordinary degree, although he had not by that time reached the zenith of his fame.

The loving *in memoriam* picture of his father by Robert Louis is to be found in 'Thomas Stevenson,' one of the 'Memories and Portraits,' and the dedication of that volume to his surviving

parent is infinitely touching in its affectionate, simple brevity :

'TO MY MOTHER,
IN THE
NAME OF PAST JOY AND PRESENT SORROW,
I DEDICATE
THESE MEMORIES AND PORTRAITS.'

Some time after the death of her husband, Mrs Stevenson, knowing that her son, although now happily married, needed her as much as she longed for his companionship, left her home here, and bravely went to the distant sunny land where the novelist found he could best enjoy a measure of health. There the presence of the surviving beloved one soothed his mother's sorrow ; and her intense interest in all that concerned him, and also in the entirely new phases of life around her, made time pass very pleasantly. When on (we think) two occasions she returned to Edinburgh for a short visit, she delighted all her friends by graphic descriptions, aided by innumerable photographs, of life in Samoa. A third time she joined her son and his household there ; but now they were not to be long together. As every one knows, after a few hours of illness, the distinguished novelist breathed his last, and sleeps in a lonely grave far from his native land, far from the spot where both his parents now rest till the great awakening. When his mother returned here she looked so changed and saddened, it seemed as if she never could be her own bright self again. True Christian resignation however, time, and the appreciation in which her lamented son was held, had their healing effect ; her wonted cheerfulness gradually reappeared, and she evidently began again to enjoy life.

At first we dreaded the most distant allusion to her loss ; but before long found that nothing pleased her more than to speak of Robert Louis and his works. This last winter she seemed specially animated and cheerful. The meeting in the Music Hall (presided over by Lord Rosebery) in connection with the proposed memorial to the

great author was a heartfelt pleasure to her. So crowded was it that with the utmost difficulty his mother effected an entrance, and only by going on the platform, much against her inclination, could she obtain a seat. 'You may believe,' she afterwards wrote, 'I listened with very mingled feelings; but I think the prevailing one was gratitude.'

A daughter of the manse, Mrs Stevenson was always, as was her husband, an attached member of the Church of Scotland and a warm friend to its missions. Kind, thoughtful, generous to a degree, she was ever ready to respond to appeals for aid in any form; and many a charity, public and private, will miss her sympathetic heart and her liberal hand.

Interested in all around her, brightly intelligent, full of anecdote, and with a keen sense of humour, she was a delightful companion; and her pleasant smile, her genial laugh, are good to remember.

The afternoon of Easter eve was the last time we saw her; and little did we think that the parting cheerful 'Good-bye' was 'Farewell' for Time.

Now the attached trio are reunited where separation is unknown; and sadly as we all mourn the recent loss, and much as we shall miss our kind friend, we cannot but feel thankful in thinking of their happiness.

Long will the skilful engineer be remembered for his work and for his worth; the fascinating writer will continuously hold his exalted place in the Temple of Fame; and to many, many a one who knew, admired, and loved her, the memory will ever be fresh and green of the mother of Robert Louis Stevenson.

B. B.

A TSAR'S GRATITUDE.

CHAPTER XIII.

No whit disconcerted, but drenched from head to foot and very cold, Philipof clambered back to the window and thrust his head and shoulders through. A second mass of ice was in the act of bearing down upon him, and Sasha determined that this time he would be ready for it. As it neared his perilous perch he scrambled out towards it and alighted, to his joy, safely upon its surface. The ice-block sank a little with his weight, for a moment, but quickly recovered its equilibrium and bore him bravely. It was a large piece of some fifteen yards in diameter, and its thickness was at least two feet, so that the weight of Philipof was really insignificant as compared with its carrying capacity, though the rains and suns of spring had rotted and weakened it so that its strength was more apparent than real. In an instant Philipof was twenty yards away from his prison walls—saved, in a moment, from both drowning and captivity; a live man and a free one for the time being, though—it must be confessed—it did not appear probable that he had done much more, so far, than exchange one way of getting drowned for another! But Philipof felt full of fight now. Irreligious and inclined to scoff as he always had been by nature, he could not help at this crisis sending up a muttering prayer for aid; while at the same moment the idea occurred to him that Providence could

hardly have released him from his horrible position within the flooded cell in order to immediately immolate him outside of it. He must surely be destined to escape once more: at all events he was going to try!

The surface of the river was covered, Philipof now saw, with blocks of ice similar in size and shape to that upon which he rode; some were larger, some smaller. There were patches of open water here and there; and boats, small barges, and bits of bath-houses and other waterside buildings, carried away by the ice, dotted here and there the surface of the rapidly moving ice-river. Philipof reflected that if he could somehow get across to the nearest boat or lighter, and climb on board, his position would be, for the time being, assured. He was the more inclined to make an attempt to do this rather than stay where he was and float down stream on his ice-raft, because, standing there, he formed an object of observation to those on shore, who would doubtless follow him up and perhaps attempt to save him, or—if he saved himself—wishes to know who he was and how he came to be there; and the result of their curiosity would, he knew, be his eventual return to the cell he had just left, with, very likely, the punishment of the knout for attempted escape. If he could get into a barge and hide himself until the current bore him out of the reach of curious eyes, he might float out of danger first and then begin to think of landing.

There was a small lighter floating down almost in a line with him, but some hundred yards away, and upon this little vessel Philipof fixed his hopes. Very carefully at first, but afterwards more boldly, he proceeded to put his plan into execution. First he jumped lightly from his own block of ice upon the next block which floated along cheek by jowl with that on which he had stood. There was an intervening space of black-looking water about five or six feet across; but this offered no impediment. The block he now alighted upon was considerably smaller than his first raft, and sank beneath his weight until the water was knee-deep, and Philipof felt that the sooner he got safely off it the wiser he should be. But the nearest piece in the direction he was making for was a good twelve feet distant, and that with a take-off from knee-deep water was a big jump to attempt standing. He undertook it, however, header-wise, plunging forward head first and alighting half in water half on ice on his stomach. After this there was an easy progress for at least fifty yards. Then Philipof suddenly stepped upon a block which was so rotten that it broke in half with his weight, and the portion his feet rested upon sloped downwards so rapidly that he slipped backwards into the water and was obliged to swim for it. A large block of ice caught him in the nape of the neck as he swam, and forced him under water, and for a moment or two Philipof thought it was all up with him. At that critical minute, as once before on a critical occasion, pious Olga's appeal to him to think of his patron-saint in moments of danger occurred to his mind, and again he did his best to call upon Alexander Nefsky for aid and intercession on his behalf. Even at that grim instant of deadly peril, Philipof could not help picturing to himself the traditional voyage of the saint upon this very river, seated upon a mill-

stone, and the humorous appropriateness of the picture commended itself to his imagination. Philipof's destiny, however, was not yet accomplished, or perhaps the saint was really, like the patron gods and goddesses of the Homeric heroes, somewhere at hand to help his votary in emergency: in any case Sasha came presently to the surface and struck out with all the little breath that the joint action of cold and a fairly long submersion had left in his body. This time he reached a large and strong piece of ice—so large that it seemed to him when he stood safely upon it that it extended almost up to the lighter towards which he was struggling. How lucky, he reflected, that he had not got under this block instead of the one he had just escaped from; his breath could never have held out until it should have passed over his head, and he would have been drowned to a certainty. As it was, he was in luck at last, for one or two small leaps now brought him in safety to the side of the barge, and the next moment Philipof swung himself over the edge of the craft and stood on the deck, feeling like a pursued criminal who has succeeded in reaching sanctuary. It was terribly cold, however, and—in hopes of finding clothes or blankets, but chiefly because it was necessary to stow himself away out of sight in case of interested spectators on the bridges and along the quays, though it was too early for many people to be about the streets—he quickly sought the tiny recess below which answered the purpose of cabin for the lighterman or men.

And now Philipof found that his run of good-luck was not over even yet. There was a fire lighted in the little cabin, and a pot of buckwheat porridge rested smoking upon it: this was good enough in itself, for he was ravenously hungry as well as chattering with cold, and here was remedy for both evils; but this was not all. On the rude plank berth was stretched a sheepskin *kaftan* such as *moujiks* wear—old and greasy and dirty beyond the dreams of griminess—yet, to one in Philipof's position, the most welcome 'find' he could have made under the circumstances. Evidently the proprietor had been surprised by the flood just as he had risen from his night's repose and made preparations for his breakfast, and had effected his escape as the craft was torn from its moorings, and set floating with the icefloes towards the Finnish Gulf. Philipof 'took the goods the gods provided.' He hung his wet clothes all over the stove to dry; he donned the dirty but delightfully warm sheepskin coat, the fur of which is worn inside, and in his case came next to the skin, and then he ate the porridge—every particle of it, and sighed and wished there were more. Soon after this there came a sudden grinding sound, the lighter seemed to sway and twist, and then came to a sudden stop. Philipof peeped out and found that, by reason of the opposition to its passage offered by the great stone bridge of Nicholas, the ice had blocked and stopped. This often happens during the spring 'moving,' the stoppages sometimes lasting for half an hour, sometimes for several hours, occasionally—if frost supervenes to harden the mass and rivet it together—for a week or more.

On this occasion the block was a tight one, and Philipof found that he was destined to spend the day on board his lighter—no very great hardship,

for the craft was loaded with grain, part of which was buckwheat meal, and there was plenty of wood for fuel. He was well in mid-stream, so that it was extremely unlikely that any one would venture over the dangerous ice in order to call upon him and inquire after his feelings. In order to discount the risk of callers as far as possible, however, Philipof never showed himself on deck, and though—with a fire going—he could not altogether avoid giving some indication of his presence on board—yet he used no more fuel than was already burning, and allowed the fire to burn out as quickly as might be, lest he should attract attention. However, the day passed without incident of any kind; passers-by upon the stone bridge did occasionally group to gaze at the derelict craft and to hope that its crew had escaped in time, but no one attempted to board her in order to find out for himself; and so the evening fell at last, and Philipof stretched himself out upon the sheepskin, and indulged in a few hours of very welcome rest, having first heaped plenty of wood upon the fire in order that his clothes might have every chance of drying before early dawn, at which time he intended to lit.

There was a pretty severe frost during the night, and the wind abated and changed. When Philipof awoke at early morning, and, finding his clothes quite dry, he donned them once more and climbed out upon the surrounding icefloes; he found these so tightly packed and frozen together that he had no difficulty whatever in walking straight across to the shore dry-shod, and landing safely close to the Nicholas Bridge. It was about three in the morning, and he was unobserved in the dim light of the dawning day. At the landing stage a sleepy night-policeman met him and was about to expostulate with him upon the folly of venturing upon the ice in its present dangerous condition, but observing that Philipof, who still wore his old Okhotsk uniform, was an officer—having come to abuse—he remained to salute. The fact that Philipof was still dressed in his uniform, which had not been taken from him at the fortress, rendered his proceedings at this stage very much simpler than they would otherwise have been.

CHAPTER XIV.

During his dreary months of captivity in the fortress, Sasha Philipof had had plenty of time to review the entire question—or questions—of his feelings for Olga, hers for him, Dostoief's for his wife, Olga's attitude towards her husband, and of his own duty under the complicated situation superinduced by Dostoief's shameful neglect of the unfortunate little woman whom he had wooed and wed under misapprehension. Was Dostoief's neglect of her attributable to a consciousness that he had never really gained her affections, which remained constant to her old love? Was Olga still in love with him, Philipof? Or, on the principle that ill-treatment at the hands of a man endears him to the ill-treated one, had Olga's affection for her husband strengthened into a warmer feeling by reason of his neglect of her? The baby's birth would contribute, doubtless, to bring the husband and wife closer together. Lastly, was he himself—Philipof—more in love with Olga to-day than had been the case while he was pledged to marry her and before Dostoief

had rendered impossible the performance of that obligation?

To the last question there could be but one reply. He was certainly immeasurably fonder of Olga now than ever before. During his captivity he had longed to see her as he had never longed in the old days of absence in the Crimea or elsewhere. He had felt that, if it were possible, he would gladly marry his little ward now. He had also felt that, if he chose to raise a finger on behalf of his own claims upon her affection, he could command her love at a moment's notice; she had never really loved Dostoief, and never could or would. The theory of ill-treatment endearing instead of repelling was nonsense. The child's birth might incline a tender heart like Olga's to feel kindly towards its father; but that was not love—Olga's love was his own: had been, was, and should be; it would depend upon himself whether he should claim his own or leave it to run to waste, a spring of pure and beautiful water that flowed into the sand and was lost.

There was one way in which this spring of pure love might yet be utilised. Sasha Philipof was a man of the highest virtue. He was well aware that Olga, though nominally Dostoief's wife, was in heart and soul his own; he knew that, if he chose to do so, he could easily persuade her simplicity into regarding her union with Dostoief as unreal, unhallowed by love, and as such wicked and impossible; and that therefore her return to himself, her own lover and betrothed, whom she had deserted in consequence of a mistake, would not only be righteous and just, but her plain and inevitable duty. Yet Philipof never dreamed of such a thing. If he and Olga were to come together, this could only be after Dostoief's removal, by death or legal separation. Sasha's sentiments towards the Hussar were at this time of the very bitterest. Dostoief had rendered himself obnoxious, first, by marrying Olga; and, secondly, by ill-treating her. Thirdly, he had given deadly affront to Philipof by his conduct in connection with Sasha's arrest and imprisonment. Sasha knew well enough that Dostoief might, if he had liked, have procured his immediate release. That he had not done so was a deadly injury, and for this last offence he should answer at the sword's point. It would be difficult, in Philipof's present position, to bring his enemy to book; but to book he should be brought, in due course; and when that happy hour arrived, Dostoief should not escape. It should be his business to bring this matter to issue as soon as possible; and, now that he was free, he had the best hopes that all would be well in a short while.

Philipof had taken the precaution to fortify himself with a good breakfast of buckwheat *kasha*, or baked porridge, which is very much to be recommended to those who have not tried it by one who has. It is delicious to the taste and extremely nourishing. Philipof found it so; for thus fortified, he was able to wander about the streets of St Petersburg from four in the morning until eight, at which hour he had promised himself the delight of visiting Olga. He could not very well go earlier than that; even eight was somewhat early for a morning call. To most people inhabiting the city whose streets he now threaded such an occupation as Philipof's present one would have been the

drearliest possible, for Russians hate walking. To Sasha, fresh from his maddening captivity of so many months, that early morning walk through the familiar deserted streets was one long progress of delight. He went on winged feet. He visited every street and byway that he knew; he walked up his own stairs and saw another man's name on the door of his lodging—it was a card nailed on to the panel—and only laughed and wondered what had been done with his things: Olga would be able to tell him, no doubt. He visited the Summer Gardens, the scene of the student's attempt upon the Emperor's life and of his own arrest—and even these painful recollections only for a moment threw a shadow over the bright surface of his content and happiness. He thought of the student and cast his eyes over the intervening area of uneven ice-blocks, wedged together, with here and there a bright pool of water where the rush of the current had resisted the sharp night-frost, to the grim fortress wall beyond, dotted with small barred windows. He saw his own window, and even thought he could make out some one at work mending the bars. Where was the student now, he wondered! Had he been rescued in some providential manner like himself; or had he fallen a victim to that drunken warden, and been miserably drowned, like a rat, in his cell—banging and thundering at the door in despair and anguish!

Philipof shuddered to think what might have been his fate and very likely actually had been that of the student. Then he took a sudden resolution and marched straight off to the Kazan Cathedral in the Nefsky. The old, patriarchal-looking, bearded and grimy caretaker, dressed in semi-eccllesiastical garb, and rubbing his eyes as he stood and looked out upon the day from the small side-door of the church which he had just opened, was surprised to see so early a worshipper, and watched Sasha rather suspiciously as he entered the sacred edifice and knelt before the shrine of St Alexander Nefsky. The tutelary saint of the Neva had done him a good turn yesterday, and Sasha's devotions before his *ikon* this morning were sincere enough; so the old caretaker concluded, for he left him to pray undisturbed, and continued his own occupation of rubbing the dust from his eyes and yawning at the side-door, convinced that the valuable jewels set in the frames of many of the greater *ikons* within the cathedral were safe enough in so far as this devout but shabby officer was concerned.

Philipof left the church greatly pleased with his own conduct. Olga would think a great deal of it, he knew. It would be delightful to be able to tell her, when she suggested a visit to the shrine of his patron (as she certainly would), that he had been already. How delighted and surprised Olga would be—dear, pious little Olga!

It was nearly eight o'clock now, however, and he might fairly direct his steps towards her home. As Philipof reflected, with mixed feelings of bitterness and satisfaction, there was little fear of encountering Dostoief at his own house. He was sure not to be there; which—though all wrong theoretically—was all right practically, for it would not suit Sasha at all to see his enemy, or rather to be seen by him, at present! If Dostoief could or would do nothing to save him when arrested, but allowed him to lie and languish for

the best part of a year in the fortress-prison, the probability was that he would get him re-arrested without scruple if he knew that he was at large.

So when, after having rung very modestly at the Dostoief door-bell, Philipof saw, to his relief and delight, that it was old Matrona who opened to him, he placed his finger on his lip to warn her, and whispered :

'Hush, Matrona; don't mention my name—I must not be seen. Is your master at home?'

Poor old Matrona, who had heroically stifled the scream which would have been so great a relief to her emotions upon catching sight of her beloved Sasha, threw herself into his arms without speaking, and blessed him and kissed him, after the manner of old Russian nurses, with many signs of the cross both over him and herself. She had drawn him within the entrance hall and shut the front door behind him.

'Oh no!' she said, 'he needn't fear; her master was not at home—there was no one in the house excepting servants, of course, and the nurse and children.'

'Children?' repeated Sasha; 'is there another then, Matrona?'

'Holy Mother!' cried the old woman, 'and you don't know that—two months ago—the sweetest baby-girl—the exact image of—' The good old nurse burst into a passion of tears.

'Whom?—her mother? Well, Matrona, there's nothing to cry about in that; so much the better. And my Olga, is she up yet?'

Matrona threw up her hands and wept aloud. 'Oh my Sashinka, my poor dove,' she wailed, 'where did they hide you away that you have not heard? Our Olga!'—Matrona paused, turning to the *ikon* in the corner and bowing and crossing herself with lamentations and incoherent prayers.

Philipof's heart sank within him; he sat down quickly—was this another calamity to be suddenly faced? Was Olga ill—or worse? He tried to speak, but no words would come. He waited awhile. 'Well, Matrona,' he said at length—and his voice sounded dry and harsh, 'speak! What is it? She is dead! Is that it?'

'Dead—dead, yes, two months dead and in heaven,' sobbed the old nurse. 'She began to pine slowly away from the day he came and told her that you, my poor Sashinka, had done a dreadful deed, and were thrown into prison for ever; and when this second baby came she just saw her, and blessed her sweet little life, and then gave up her own. Our poor darling! it was not that she believed you guilty, for she never did; and she often made me promise, if I ever saw you again, to tell you so. But she could not bear to think of you in prison, and she was never really strong since that first illness, when you were away at the war; she just seemed to fade slowly away, like a flower!'

'And—and her husband?' muttered Sasha hoarsely. He could not bring himself to pronounce Dostoief's name.

'He was not present when she died,' sobbed Matrona; 'but he came afterwards and seemed much moved, more so than one would suppose. He was at the funeral of course, and wept much. But since then we see little of him—once a month he comes to learn that all is well with the children, and I am instructed to report to him every week,

and especially if anything occurs. Oh that our beloved had lived two months longer and seen you—now that your innocence is proved, she'

'My innocence is not proved, Matrona; I have escaped. I am innocent, of course, but you must say nothing to him about having seen me—not just at present, at all events!'

Matrona crossed herself and prayed audibly in her horror.

'Not a word!' she protested; 'but you will come and see the children sometimes!'

'Is the nurse to be trusted?'

'She is my own niece, Katia; you know her well. She is as devoted to you and yours as I myself!'

Then Philipof paid a visit to his small nephew and niece, as he, being a Russian, would call these little ones, the children of his cousin; and it comforted him to see them and fondle them and to pick out the likeness in tiny Olga to her dead mother. After that he and the old nurse had a quiet talk over the coffee—there is no coffee like that which these old Russian nurses can brew; and Philipof learned that his property had been confiscated and his lodging sealed up until his papers had been examined by the police. As for his money, Matrona knew nothing of it; but her dead mistress had left a packet for him to be given to him in case he ever appeared; there was money in that, Matrona knew, for 'Olyushka' had said so; her dear cousin might need it if he were released from prison some day, she said, and her children would be rich without that. Then Matrona added, blushing and confused, that she and Katia had saved a part of their wages for the same purpose, and produced quite a respectable sum of money thus devotedly collected, which she placed in his hands, together with poor dead Olga's packet.

Philipof's heart grew very soft as the good old nurse unfolded her tale of devotion. There were tears in his eyes as he returned the money to the two women, and kissed them both without speaking. Katia remembered that kiss for many a day. Afterwards he told them that he could not now accept their gift, but promised that if he were ever in real need of funds he would apply to them for a loan.

Olga's packet contained a considerable sum of money however, no less than five hundred roubles. There was also a photograph of herself and a few trinkets which had belonged to her dead mother. With these there was a long and loving letter from Olga, in which she commended her children to his care; assured him of her absolute belief in his innocence; adjured him, as a solemn bequest from a dying woman, never under any circumstances to quarrel with her husband; and said a good deal about Alexander Nefsky and the powers of that saint to protect his special votaries when specially called upon. Philipof read the letter with tears and buttoned it up in his breast-pocket. Then he took leave of the two faithful women, promising to visit them as often as possible, and went away to take the necessary steps for his own safety.

He engaged a modest apartment in a by-street in the Vassiliostrof (Basil Island), purchased plain clothes, and set about to obtain employment. This he eventually found, after much seeking, in the office of an English merchant who, being

in need of a Russian clerk, and feeling interested in the story of Sasha—which was true as far as he told it—engaged him at a moderate salary to write letters in the vernacular to his agents in the interior of the country. Sasha had found it more convenient to seek employment among the members of a foreign community, because there would be fewer inquiries made as to passports and such matters by an English employer—*inquiries which would be awkward indeed for him, who did not at present possess one of those important documents.*

S T R A T H S P E Y.

By BENJAMIN TAYLOR.

In all broad Scotland there is no region more inspired with the romance of the past and more instinct with the beauty of the present than that which is collectively, but somewhat vaguely, called Strathspey. Amongst the rivers of the country the Spey itself is the swiftest and second longest—the Tay alone having the superiority in length. But not even the classic Tay can rival the great stream to the north of the Grampians in volume, in forceful flow, in eventful history, and in picturesque environments. Not of Spey can it be said as of Denham's river that it is 'strong without rage, without o'erflowing, full'—for, as a matter of fact, its rage is often fierce, and its course is marked by long history of inundations. Who has not heard of the great Moray Floods, and who does not know of Sir Thomas Dick Lauder? The tourist in Speyside can no more keep Lauder out of his perspective than Mr Dick could keep King Charles the First out of his memorial. The garrulous Baronet of Relugas is ubiquitous in this region; and, truth to say, we would get on badly without him. In fact, the traveller from Perth to Inverness who rejects the guidance of Sir Thomas Dick Lauder through the Moray Floods, the Highland legends, and the lair of the Wolf of Badenoch, must be accounted lost to the grace of a vanishing art.

Upwards of thirteen hundred square miles of country are drained by this romantic and voluminous stream, we are told. Prodigious! But what 'plain man' or woman (only women are never plain) can mentally or otherwise grasp thirteen hundred square miles of territory? More easy, at any rate, is it to understand the force of the current of this river (which is said to throw more water into the ocean than any other stream in Great Britain) when we learn that it has its source in the Braes of Badenoch, some twelve hundred feet above the sea, and that it drops to sea-level in a course of only about a hundred miles, while constantly fed by impetuous tributaries. To its rapid flow it owes its name—at least according to the respectable Shaw, whose views on Picts and Teutons were hardly orthodox, to say the least. The Spey, he says, 'seemeth to have its name from the Teutonic or Pictish word *Spe* (*Spectum*) because the rapidity of it raiseth much foam.' If this be not true it is at least sufficiently 'well found' to answer the purpose of all but the hypercritical.

It is a self-contained stream too—much less ambitious in the matter of reputed sources than the classic Nile or even the romantic Tay. As

the worthy but finical McCulloch remarks: 'It is one decided Spey from its very spring, receiving numerous accessions but no rival. Its course is almost everywhere rapid; nor does it show any still water till near the very sea. It is also the wildest and most capricious of our large rivers; the alternations of emptiness and flood being more complete and more sudden than those of any other stream.'

And what a history it has conveyed to the heaving bosom of the northern sea! What tales of love and devotion, of chivalry and treachery, of clan conflicts and of national vicissitude! How its now rushing, now babbling waters

Tell of a time when music's flow,
In bridal bower or birth-day hall,
Hath often changed from mirth to woe,
From joyous dance to vengeful call;

or,

Tell of a time when from their steep,
The mournful bier oft wound its way,
And kindred scarce had time to weep,
When summoned to the bloody fray.

Those who would 'recall the straths of rapid Spey' must travel far in time and space. The river flows, or rather rushes, to the Moray Firth between the northern range of the Grampian chain and the Monadhliadh (or gray) Mountains. Keeping watch and ward over its course are the gigantic peaks of the Cairngorm (or blue) Mountains, and that course is through three counties, which formed the ancient province of Moravia, or Moray. In Ptolemy's map the Spey figures as the *Tuessis*, discharging into the *Tuessis* *Æstuarium*, with a Roman town or station called *Tuessis* near where now stands Castle Grant. After the Romans came the kingdom of the Picts, and then in the ninth century came the union of Picts and Scots, followed by the ascendancy of the Scots and the re-division of Scotland into Highland and Lowland. In the fifteenth century the country of the Spey was divided between the three lordships of Balvany, Badenoch, and Lochaber—the homes and haunts respectively of the Grants and Gordons, the Macphersons, and the Camerons.

Of Lochaber the memories are endless, though it includes some of the dreariest and most barren, as well as some of the most romantic, districts of Scotland. Here was killed the last wolf in Britain in 1680, and here was invented the deadly axe which figures so much in Scottish history. It was in Lochaber that some of the most stirring events of the times of the Lord of the Isles occurred; it was in Lochaber that the last stand was made against the troops of Cromwell; and it was in Lochaber that the Young Chevalier made both his entrance and his exit in the fatal '45. And from Lochaber has re-echoed round the world the plaintive melody, which has been well defined as expressive of a breaking heart, and over which so many hearts have throbbed to breaking:

Lochaber no more, to Lochaber no more,
We'll maybe return to Lochaber no more!

But Lochaber is a wide term that brings us to the shores of the Atlantic, whereas our purpose is with the valley of the Spey.

It is said of Badenoch—

The land of the Macphersons
Where Spey's wide waters flow,
In the land where Royal Charlie
Knew his best friend in his woe—

that no district of the Highlands, in proportion to its size, has produced so many distinguished soldiers. Once upon a time all the heads of all the branches of the Macpherson clan gave all their sons to the profession of arms; and within living memory nearly all the farms in Badenoch belonged to or were occupied by retired Macpherson soldiers who had distinguished themselves in the service of their country. But other times other manners; most of these farms are now in the hands of strangers. Perhaps this portion of Speyside is best known to the general reader in connection with the notorious 'Wolf of Badenoch,' of whom Sir Thomas Dick Lauder has told at length. Kingussie, the capital of Badenoch, is well known to all travellers on the Highland Railway as the one place of refreshment between Perth and Inverness. Here the Spey is some eight hundred feet above the level of the sea. Its source is about twenty-six miles from Kingussie, and in its course to the sea, for three centuries (according to Skene), it formed the boundary between 'Scotia,' or Scotland proper, and 'Moravia' or the great province of Moray.

From Kingussie, facing northwards, we descend into the extensive valley intersected by the river Spey—a rich vale through which the stream winds in beautiful curves. Now we enter the shadow of the mighty Ben Muich Dhui and of the shapely cone of Cairngorm, in the crevices of the summits of which the snow forms dazzling white patches even in the hottest summer. Cutting through the ancient forest of Rothiemurchus, we cross the boundary-line between Badenoch and Strathspey, and near Aviemore find the craggy watch-hill of Craigellachie, the southern outpost of the Grant clan, whose northern limit on the Spey, thirty miles away, bears the same name. Hence the famous clan slogan, 'Stand fast, Craigellachie!' Here we are in the very centre of the Grampians; and though within thirty miles of Braemar yet separated from it by mountain-masses of four thousand feet, through which is only one practicable and difficult pass. From Aviemore one may ascend the Cairngorms or explore the forests of Rothiemurchus and Glenmore, while we who seek the Land of the Reel press on through pine-woods to Boat of Garten, from which we view the grand stretch of Strathspey—the beautiful river speeding through a spacious valley fringed by fragrant pine-woods and encircled by the everlasting hills.

Seventy years ago this smiling valley was a desolate waste of waters, such as the sons of Noah saw from the windows of the ark before the waters reached the mountain tops. The great floods of August 1829 converted the greater portion of Strathspey into an inland sea. Where the Nethy joins the Spey, in the romantic district of Abernethy, the stream rose more than twenty feet above its normal level, and it is said that a fifty-gun frigate might have been sailed from Boat of Balliefurth to Boat of Garten. (The nomenclature of the district, by the way, abounds in 'Boats' and 'Bridges,' as if the minds of the inhabitants

were ever bent on the river and its affluents.) In many places the flood rose so high that when the waters subsided hundreds of sheep were found alive in the topmost branches of the trees.

Nothing, says Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, can equal the sublimity of the scene on the memorable morning in August 1829. 'An entire river poured itself over the rugged and precipitous brow of the hill of Upper Craigellachie, converting its furrowed front into one vast and diversified waterfall. Every object around was veiled in a sort of obscurity, save where occasional glimpses of the lofty Cairngorm burst forth amidst the fury of the tempest, and he reared his proud head as if in mockery above it.' The Spey has always been subject to sudden 'spates,' and within living memory there have been inundations of appalling extent, though none, perhaps, so extensive and disastrous as the great flood of 1829, which Sir Thomas Dick Lauder has commemorated, and of which we are reminded in every stage of our journey on Speyside, by oral and written tradition.

In entering Strathspey, we pass through Kinrara, now the property of the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, where the 'witty Duchess of Gordon' frequently lived and where she lies buried, and where Elizabeth, the last Duchess of Gordon, retired from the world. Gordon Castle, however, is far away at the mouth of our river, and the vast Gordon estates, with all their romantic associations, are now, with the old Scottish title, merged in the properties of the Duke of Richmond, Gordon, and Lennox.

Between Kinrara and the chief Gordon country is the land of the Grants of various ilks :

Come the Grants of Tullochgorum
Wi' their pipers gaun before 'em,
Proud the mothers are that bore 'em,
Fiddle-fa-fum.

Next the Grants of Rothiemurchus,
Every man his sword and durk has,
Every man as proud's a Turk is,
Feeble-dee-dum—

as Sir Alexander Boswell sang.

That there is a magic in the very name 'Strathspey' is not to be denied. It is not in the Highlander alone the emotions are stirred by the associations which the name awakens, although it may be that none but a Highlander can fully appreciate all the figurative strains of its poetry, or can grow properly enthusiastic over the tales of the conquests of the rival clans. For nowhere in the Highlands has clanship been more distinctively marked, and nowhere has the national music had more powerful effect, whether in the martial pibroch, the lively reel, or the wailing coronach. 'Not a turn of the river,' says good old Dr Longmuir, the historian of this district, 'not a pass in the mountain, or the name of an estate, that does not recall some wild legend of the olden, or some thrilling event of more recent, times; not a plain that is not associated with some battle; not a castle that has not stood its siege, or been enveloped in flames; not a dark pool or gloomy loch that has not its tale either of guilt or superstition; not a manse that has not been inhabited by some minister that eminently served his Master; or a "town" that has not been the birthplace of some who have shone either in the

literature, the commerce, or the armies of their country.'

It may be that the frequent stone circles and isolated 'standing stones' do not speak so definitely of Druidical occupation as the guide-books would have us believe; but though we may find some other explanation of their origin, their hoary masses tell us that these straths were peopled in an age that has forgotten to leave its history. That Fingal fought and Ossian sang here who can doubt, when we know that the revealer of the Ossianic poems to a wondering modern world was a Speyside Macpherson? Whether or not Ossian sang here, we are at the birthplace of the famous Reel of Tulloch, and in the land from which emanated the strange, wild music known as the 'Strathspey,' known to and loved by thousands to whom Ossian is only a name. Right in the midst of the strath, and facing the Blue Mountain is Tullochgorum, belonging to a sept of the Clan Grant, with whom tradition has associated the peculiar music named after the district. The Reel of Tulloch, however, is said to have been composed by a Macgregor, who wedded a maid of Tulloch, and had slain a number of her clansmen who opposed the match. The Strathspey reel, again, is said to have been invented by the Cummings of Castle Grant; while the song of Tullochgorum (said rather extravagantly by Burns to be the best Scotch song Scotland ever saw) was written by an Episcopal clergyman, the Rev. John Skinner of Longside, Aberdeenshire, to the old tune composed by the Macgregor for the Maid of Tulloch.

Since before 1890 public attention has been frequently drawn to the falling-off in the rod-fishing on the Spey, and as the result of an inquiry by Mr Henry Ffennell, he condemned the persistent manner in which the nets were worked night and day for nine miles above the mouth of the river, by which means he believed the Duke of Richmond was robbing himself. This goes on from Monday morning till midnight on Friday. The increase of the distilleries making the famed Glenlivet whisky is another factor, for the distillery refuse discharged into the river has increased a hundredfold. Salmon-fry placed in the polluted water taken below certain distilleries all died; in the water taken from above they kept all right. This in not a few cases has led to strained relations and litigation. By passing the refuse from the distilleries into settling ponds before its discharge into the Spey the danger to the fishing has been much mitigated.

THE FURNACE MAN.

CHAPTER III.

THUS it was that Geordie took up the thread of his life again, and followed its leadings, though in a dogged, surly manner that soon won for him the character of being the most cross-grained man anywhere about Castor Heath. But life was never the same again to him, nor had his work that same energetic swing it had had only a few weeks before.

He was still the best puddler Jabez Drew had in his employ, still able to gather on the end of his 'rabble' heavier balls than any other man

could have lifted; but he never again sang at his work; and he changed his erect bearing and square shoulders for a heavy slouching gait, carrying his head so low that his chin almost touched his chest.

So the months crept on to winter, and winter changed to spring, bringing no gleam of hope to Geordie, but rather adding to his bitterness of spirit.

For rumours had reached him that things were not going well with Liz, and he regretted his promise not to chastise Tim while she lived. He heard that Liz was neglected and left alone for days at a time. Nay, she had even been struck —kicked, the rumour said—one night by Tim when he was in liquor. But Geordie could not bring himself to believe that.

It is, perhaps, not difficult to understand how Tim had managed to exercise such influence over Liz. He had put a power over her, as many a man has done with a weak, vain, shallow, and frivolous woman. Tim was high up in the social ladder of Burter's Buildings. His house of furniture, and about ten pounds per annum he received from his father's executors, made it less necessary for him to be in constant employment than the majority of workmen around Castor Heath. He always dressed too in a fashion superior to that of the men he came in contact with, and never failed to drink a glass of wine with mine host of the 'Pig and Pipe' on every alternate Saturday night, after he, in common with all other workers in those parts, had received his bi-monthly wage.

Not that Tim was by any means a favourite. In fact, but for his money, he would have been relegated to a very obscure position in Castor Heath society, being of a mean and villainous type of character. The men could not stand his fine airs and fine clothes; his long, tawny moustache; the perpetual flower in his button-hole on Sunday; and lastly his scented pocket-handkerchief! This latter offended his companions extremely. They did not use handkerchiefs themselves, and abominated scents.

Naturally enough, perhaps, the clothes and flowers, moustache and perfumes, attracted many among the women, and none more so than Liz. Wherefore, being fickle, inconstant, and flighty—as the Milton Row barber had warned Geordie—she had allowed Tim to put a power over her, and thus ministered to her own undoing.

Having gained his end, having prevailed with Liz and carried off the belle of Burter's Buildings from under the bridegroom's eyes, Tim soon grew tired of his prize. Coldness was followed by harshness; then came neglect, and after that ill-treatment and blows.

Being of a mean and contemptible character, Tim delighted to imagine that in some way he could revenge himself on his former rival by being cruel to Liz. He had never forgiven Geordie for the moral victory he had obtained over him the previous summer, and hoped his

ill-treatment of Liz would drive her to complain to her old lover and thus bring on the fight he had been balked of before. In this, however, he was disappointed. Whoever Liz might confide her woes to, she certainly did not go to Geordie.

Perhaps it was this feeling of disappointment on Tim's part which at last led to a memorable conflict between the two men, and one which brought public opinion entirely round to Geordie's side.

He was sitting one evening, in early spring, in the bar-parlour of the 'Pig and Pipe,' smoking and drinking his customary mug of beer, when the door was suddenly swung heavily open and Tim lunched in, pretty well on in liquor, having, in fact, reached stage number two—the quarrel-some.

"Ullo!" he cried, catching sight of the furnace-man, 'be thou here? I thought thou'd given up drink and all such man-like ways.'

But Geordie made no answer. His mug would be emptied and his pipe finished in a minute or two, and then he would be off. However, Tim had no intention of letting him escape so easily.

'Got married yet?' he asked, with a sneer. 'Chaps,' he added, with a laugh, 'here's a fellow as wants a wife. Can't we fit him?'

'Shut up, Tim!' said one of his friends, who had noticed an ugly look pass over Geordie's face at this brutal speech, as he rose slowly and crossed over to the bar to pay his score.

'Hold yer jab,' hiccuped Tim. 'I do hear,' he added, turning to the man he was baiting, 'as how you've sold all that pretty furniture; or burned it, was it? Pity you didn't send it to Liz an' me.'

But never a word did the furnace-man utter. His breath came quick and short; his hands were clenched deep in his trousers pockets, the veins on his forehead seemed fit to burst, as he moved slowly towards the door leading to the open street, looking neither to right nor left.

Some good-natured fellow would have held Tim back, but he pushed his way out after his enemy. He was exasperated by his cool silence.

'Cum, now,' he said, 'I asked thee to fight me worst and thee wouldn't. Will thee fight me now?'

No answer from the man walking with slow, heavy tread in the middle of the road.

'Thee won't?' the half-drunken fellow hiccuped, seizing Geordie's arm; 'then take that.'

A smart blow on the cheek sent every particle of blood in Geordie's system first to his heart and then back to his head in one mighty rush. This was too much for human endurance.

'A fight! a fight!' was cried on all sides. Several men went to back Tim, though far the greater number stood by Geordie. He had torn off his coat and waistcoat in a flash and thrown them on the ground.

Suddenly he stopped, as he was rolling up the right sleeve of his shirt. Like oil on troubled waters came the memory of his promise to Liz. The sleeve was slowly unrolled again, the coat and waistcoat picked up and thrown over his arm. Then he turned to the men around him, who stood silent with astonishment.

'Lads,' he said, 'I've taken a blow to-day

without givin' it back again, an' the smart of it will be bitter to me all my life. And I've been blamed for a coward, but I can't fight. Because when Liz—' and he paused as if doubtful for a word—'ay, when Liz married Tim I promised I'd never strike him while her was alive, and I'm not goin' back on it.'

Simple words these, but spoken so earnestly and with such sorrow in their accents that the hearers instinctively felt the victory lay with Geordie. They stood on one side to allow him to pass on his way up the road, still with the coat and waistcoat over his arm. It certainly was a pity such a dirty, miserable chap as Tim should not have had a little of the conceit knocked out of him, but—

'Put Tim in horse-pond,' a voice cried out, and the suggestion was immediately taken up with a laugh. Now, the horse-pond was opposite the door of the 'Pig and Pipe,' and its contents were composed of two-thirds mud and one-third stagnant and foul water.

Tim was forthwith seized, his friends being too few to protect him, and dragged to the edge of the pond. Two men laid hold of his wrists, two his feet, and he was swung from side to side a few times, face downwards; then, with a 'one, two, three, and away,' he was shot out into mid-air, and fell with a monstrous flop, in spread-eagle fashion, right in the centre of the pond.

He emerged, covered with mud and slime, sobered by the cold water, and furious at the laughs and jeers of the crowd on the bank. He spat the foul water from his mouth, and waded to the side, stirring up the stinking mud at the bottom of the pond, while the men above him almost tumbled down with merriment at the success of their joke.

'Want some scent, Tim?' one asked.

'Give him a hankcher,' shouted a second.

'Eh, Tim, those fine clothes of yours look wet.'

The poor draggled wretch struggled up the bank, green mud hanging from shoulders, head, and arms, his legs swathed, from thigh downwards, in oily-looking mud. But his troubles were not yet over.

'Seem to be in want o' a wash, Tim,' some one cried. 'Come, chaps, and put him under pump.'

So Tim was carried, resisting as well as he could, to the trough, standing in the stable-yard of the 'Pig and Pipe,' plunged in, and vigorously pumped upon. Thus, at any rate, he became clean again, but was still not yet out of the wood, or, perhaps one ought to say, out of the water.

The joke was too good to be curtailed. Such an opportunity might never occur again. The men were like schoolboys in mischief. To have such a fine gentleman as Tim Snacker entirely in their hands, to maul and muck at their own sweet will, was the best bit of fun of the season. Their loud laughter echoed and re-echoed around the yard. Those who were not near enough to manipulate the pump-handle, or assist in holding Tim down, stood around on tiptoe trying to get occasional peeps at him.

And it was these, when the victim was at last allowed to scramble out of the trough, dazed and confused with his most unusual experiences, who

hurried him out of the yard and into the open road.

'Roll him in the dust, lads, and dry him a bit,' they cried.

So Tim was rolled over and over in the thick, black, powdery dust, till, after being nearly choked with mud and drowned with water, he was now in some danger of suffocation. Indeed, it is quite possible matters might have gone too far and Tim have met with serious injuries had not a horse and trap, driven rapidly along the road, caused the crowd to divert, and thus gave him an opportunity to make a rush for liberty.

He ran as man surely never ran before or since, hotly pursued by the rough-haired terrier, who sprang up at him, and tore out a great piece from his hinder garments. My faith! what a glorious time this had been to the rough-haired terrier. How he had yap-yap-yapped till he almost cracked his throat, rushing here and there in all directions, getting in the way of the men, tumbling in the trough, blinding himself with dust, till he put the final touch to the ruin of Tim's trousers by tearing off a piece from their very centre.

But as Tim ran, one thought, and one only, filled his mind. He would make Liz pay for this second defeat; he would take a dire vengeance for the ill-treatment he had received.

'Curse her,' he muttered, when he was at a safe distance; 'and curse you,' he cried, turning round to face the crowd, while he shook his fist at them, only to immediately resume his running, as one or two men made a motion as if to give chase. 'Ay, laugh away,' he sneered, as a derisive shout came up the road, 'laugh away. Liz will have marks on her back to show for this to-morrow.'

Poor Geordie! If he could have foreseen the result of his forbearance that evening, would he not have broken ten thousand promises rather than add anything to the sufferings Liz was already enduring?

During all these months he had never once seen Liz. He had been at Burter's Buildings two or three times, but Liz was never there now, and Tim's house was away at the other side of Castor Heath, so that there was little chance of their meeting. But at length he came across her, and in this wise.

He was walking on the heath one evening towards sunset, and had unconsciously taken the path he had followed on his first visit to Tim, when, on approaching a stile leading over a stone wall, he noticed the figure of a woman standing against it. The light was too dim to enable him to see anything of her features or form, so that he was almost within a couple of yards of her before he recognised—Liz!

He stopped and stood by her as stiff as a statue. He could not get over the stile unless she moved, and his dogged nature refused to allow him to turn back. So he gazed with stony face over the heath and away from Liz, while his heart beat like a steam-hammer.

'I saw yer comin', Geordie,' and at the sound of her voice, changed, alas! from the time he heard it last, the strong furnace man trembled, and stayed, for I wanted to speak to yer.'

Poor Liz. If she had sinned she had truly sorrowed. Dark lines of grief were beneath her eyes, and on her brow and cheeks were other

markings not of grief's making. Her eyes had lost that starry brightness Geordie knew so well. Her sprightly figure was bowed with the weight of her breaking heart.

'I wronged yer, Geordie; wronged yer sore,' Liz pleaded; 'an' I want to ask yer forgiveness.'

But Geordie's lips uttered no sound. He held himself as stiffly as doggedly as before.

'Father an' mother have cast me off, Geordie,' the sad voice continued, 'an' I don't blame them. But I should like to have forgiveness from you.'

No answer, unless the clenched hands laid on top of the stone wall with knotted veins on their backs were an answer. The stony face still looked away across the heath, though the heart beneath it was beating more wildly than ever.

'I know I shan't live through it, Geordie, an' it'd comfort me as I lie dyin' to think I'd had just one kind word from you.'

Go on, Liz. Try once again. The big heart is almost melted now. One more effort and the hands upon the wall will unclench, the strong arms fold round you and take you and your shame into their embrace. Forgiveness is yours with one more effort.

But that effort was not made. Liz did not plead a fourth time. She turned and gazed at the figure of the man standing by her, and saw in it nothing but unrelenting justice, untempered with the slightest drop of mercy. What could she know of the tremendous battle going on beneath Geordie's waistcoat?

So, with a heavy, heavy sigh, she lifted her weary limbs over the stile and dragged them to what was called her home.

A week later word was brought to the furnace-man one morning that Liz was very ill, and on the evening of the next day he heard that she was dead; died in child-birth he was told, though most people said from ill-treatment mainly.

At first Geordie would not believe the news. He was shocked, too, that it should come so soon after his meeting with Liz. He had reproached himself bitterly for his hard-hearted pride and obstinacy in not speaking to her that night; and now came tidings of her death.

Finding that the tidings were true and that she was indeed dead, all his old desire to take vengeance on Tim returned. He was freed from his promise now; free to show all the world that he was no coward. Free to punish Tim for every wrong, every insult, every unkindness, every act of cruelty he had inflicted upon the woman he ought to have loved and protected.

To-morrow he would go and have it out with him; and this time nothing should save him, nothing intervene. And with a heart full of thoughts of vengeance he went to rest.

He set off immediately after breakfast for the stone house on the other side of Castor Heath. He did not invite any one to accompany him this time, but started alone, his brows contracted and lips pressed firmly together, determined that the punishment Tim was to receive should be full and complete. He would not smash him or break any bones, but would certainly not stop much short of that.

During the night the wind had risen higher and higher, until by nine o'clock an awful hurricane was blowing, a hurricane remembered for many a long day on the coasts of Britain, and regarded

as more than a nine days' wonder even at such an inland place as Blacktown.

The howling wind tearing across the heath, blowing now in this direction and now in that, seemed a fitting companion to the solitary being walking along towards the north-west extremity of the storm-swept area. Geordie found a keen enjoyment in resisting its force. Now it would blow direct in front of him, and he had to lean forward and bend his knees if he wished to keep his feet at all ; then a great blast would strike him in the back and he would run before it, for thus he would reach the stone cottage sooner. Or else, at other times, all around him would be a comparative calm, while over his head he could hear the wind roaring as though wild bulls were fighting in the sky ; moment later and it seemed as if the bulls had fallen in one mass on his head, as the terrific wind descended vertically and almost crushed him to the earth.

Now fighting his way onward—with the rough-haired terrier, looking like an animated ball of ragged worsted, trotting at his heels—now running before the storm, or again pausing to take breath during a temporary lull, he struggled on and in time reached Tim's house, only to find it closed, locked, and empty.

'He's soon put her out of his sight,' Geordie muttered, as he turned away and set off in the direction of the works where Tim was employed, hoping to find him there ; 'soon got rid of her,' and he reckoned that as another count in his indictment against Tim.

To do the latter justice, however, he had not been in any unseemly haste over the burial of Liz. Her death had occurred three days before Geordie had even heard that she was ill, so that Tim could not be accused of undue haste, though, no doubt, he had had no great desire to delay matters. Geordie, however, did not know this, and Tim's apparent callousness added fresh fuel to the fires of his anger.

THE CYCLE AND THE TRADE OF THE MIDLANDS.

THE yearly increasing popularity of cycling and the enormous sums of public money which, within the last eighteen months, have been invested in the cycle trade, are circumstances of interest and importance in themselves, and as such have naturally drawn wide attention to the industry—its origin, development, present position, and probable future.

It was in the Midland counties of England where the trade first settled, and there it is centred to-day, though the making of cycles is by no means confined now to that busy hive of industrial activity of which Birmingham is the metropolis. Cycle-manufacture has had a very great influence on the prosperity of the district, and more particularly on Coventry, where it has really metamorphosed many local characteristics and changed the life of the people. The transformation is the greater there, because cycle-building engages a larger proportion of the population than it does at either Birmingham, Wolverhampton, or Nottingham, or indeed any other

town ; and, moreover, Coventry being smaller than either Birmingham, Wolverhampton, or Nottingham, it is easier to gauge the alterations that have come with the trade—the benefits and possible drawbacks.

That the industry found its earliest lodgment where it did was, in one way, the purest accident. A sewing-machine traveller was in Paris in 1867, and found the wooden 'bone-shaker' being ridden, and he was offered an order for a large number of machines of similar build if he could get them made in England. He sent to his firm at Coventry, where sewing-machines had lately been constructed as a means of finding employment for citizens almost ruined by the French treaty of 1860. The bicycle was made, and, what was more, improved. It may be said to have come out of the sewing-machine, and the sewing-machine out of the watch—that is, the local watchmakers were found to be particularly adapted for the making of the other machine, and, in turn, for the present popular means of travel. But while the cycle was for a long time exclusively made at Coventry, so soon as steel was used in the construction, and iron felloes for the wheels, other places in the Midlands were bound to play a part in the making. None of the components—a word of quite modern use in relation to this trade—were produced at the place where the complete machine was turned out. Coventry not only improved but built the bicycle ; yet the tubing was made at Sheffield, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, and in Sweden. Saddles, bells, spokes, bags, and what not, were manufactured elsewhere, and the wood then used for tyres often came from distant lands. The Midlands outside Coventry got the bulk of this trade, and still retain it ; though lately several of the component industries have been planted in what is sometimes called 'Cyclopolis.'

Wolverhampton took up cycle-making at a comparatively early date—the name of the late Mr Daniel Rudge being the best known there—and Mr Thomas Humber, still living, planted a business at Beeston. But Mr Rudge, or at any rate his business, was soon transferred to Coventry. Birmingham also founded a trade, and cycle-making shops sprang up at the same time in many other parts of England too. Still the fact remains that the Midland counties can lay claim—and no doubt the claim is indisputable—to doing the bulk of the business ; and the Birmingham market has six times the transactions in cycle-shares of all the other stock exchanges put together.

If we leave out the Midlands capital and the Black Country capital, it is the fact that the cycle trade has introduced many new elements into the towns whither it has gone. In the first place, it has earned much additional wealth ; but this chiefly in later years, for in the early days immense sums of money were lost in vain endeavours to found businesses. Still, the employés benefited when employers were ruined, or nearly so. But it must not be supposed that all the

people who embarked money in cycles became financial wrecks. Very far from that has been the case. There are not a few men who went from distant homes to start in this trade as mechanics or general managers who are to-day very wealthy ; the former have done best. Indeed, it is one of the striking features of the industry—and this should be an encouragement to working men—that until very recently the profits have gone almost entirely into the pockets of those who themselves worked at the bench with turned-up shirt-sleeves and in aprons. Industrious and clever artisans found persons with money ready to combine with them in the establishment and maintenance of cycle-works.

The standard of wealth has been everywhere raised in the last quarter of a century. Time was when men with £10,000 or £15,000 saved were content to either retire from business altogether or at any rate give up the active pursuit to others ; but so large have been many of the fortunes made in commercial life of late years, that people have not been content to leave off work until in possession of an amount of wealth which was beyond the dreams of their fathers. The cycle trade has produced its capitalists who, so far as money is able to do it, put into the shade many men hitherto deemed well-off. When one hears of a manufacturer building and furnishing a mansion at a cost of £80,000, of another selling his factory and goodwill for over half-a-million of money, and of scores of others also in opulence, little wonder that ordinary fortunes seem puny in comparison and their possessors of little account in the social scale.

We have shown that people having no original or necessary connection with the making of vehicles have had a share of the earnings from cycle-making. To thousands of them it has been a good share in the sense that they have earned better wages in this way than they were likely to earn in other callings. For the most part these machinists, as they are called, were not skilled workmen when they entered on the business. Often as not they have done some work in an iron-foundry, or they have gone into the towns from the agricultural districts. They at once make fourpence-halfpenny per hour, and very soon rise to sixpence and sevenpence. The skilled men in the recent 'boom' times got week by week from fifty shillings to four pounds ; and when they were piece-hands, with others under them, it was not at all uncommon for a cycle-builder to earn five and six pounds. A boy of tender years, who has just passed the necessary standard in an elementary school, starts work at ten shillings, and by eighteen years of age he will be getting his twenty-five to thirty shillings weekly. So the workers have been helped considerably, and the wise among them are permanently better off.

Girls and young ladies have gone very largely into the cycle trade. The rougher work is that of packing and painting, the lighter is of a clerical character. The daily correspondence in all cycle-factories is very great and almost invariably the letters are typewritten. The wages paid to shorthand clerks and typists are considered good—from twenty to thirty shillings, while some young ladies in responsible positions earn more. The hours of business are about seven and a half

per day, and half-a-day off on Saturday, with the usual, or more than the usual, holidays.

Where, as at Coventry, Redditch, and Long Eaton, the cycle people form a large proportion of the total population, the general trade of these places has immensely benefited by the coming of the cycle, and by the increased popularity of the pastime belonging to it. The industry has been the commercial salvation of Coventry ; the population steadily increases, and since the last census it has added one thousand persons each year. The building trade has long been brisk, and bricklayers, carpenters, plumbers, paperhangers, &c., have had the advantage of an increase in wages. All departments of local life have been put under pressure. In Birmingham, too, many large new factories are erected solely for this trade. The brokers' offices were for months almost entirely employed in cycle-share transactions. The tube-makers of the Black Country do well. The whole of the industrial Midlands has, indeed, found increased wealth by the expansion of the cycle trade.

Nothing has hitherto been said about cycling itself—the use of the machine which some one has alleged the prophet Isaiah must have had a vision of when he saw one wheel with one cherub, and another wheel with another cherub—because the recreation belongs to everywhere now. But, perhaps, there is more riding in the Midlands than elsewhere ; people there are so much brought into contact with the machine, and the highways have always been kept up to a high standard of efficiency. An official police report once made to the Home Office declared that 'everybody in Coventry rides,' and really it would seem that more do so there than elsewhere. The usefulness of the cycle is now beyond dispute. It was of service in the Transvaal 'revolution,' and it goes to hounds and weddings in the Midlands. Not unfrequently it beats the trains in speed. Sometimes accidents are caused by it, but these are incidental to all means of locomotion.

The cycle trade, with its £30,000,000 of capital invested, and its employment of 40,000 hands, has thus done a good deal. Wealth has been made in piles, and all classes engaged in the work are, or might be, considerably better off in consequence. The cycle-worker is of a type distinct from the native in several of the places he has invaded ; he often lacks desirable characteristics which belong to the men of the older crafts, and many of the principals lack the refinements of the London and Liverpool commercial potentates. But we must make the best of the world as we find it, and maybe presently, as cycle-making becomes more of a settled and less of a spasmodic occupation than it has been, the race which carries on this immense trade will have other tastes and a larger sense of citizenship. We can never forget that, after all, they have done a great work. He is a benefactor who makes two blades of grass to grow where only one grew before : then, too, must they be good geniuses who plant and carry out an industry that employs many thousands of people and causes wealth to be distributed in millions of pounds yearly. They have given the world a new pastime and the country districts fresh life.

In *Chambers's Journal*, as long ago as 1882, we

find the following: 'With such a machine as the electric tricycle, we can foresee the day when the old Red Lion and the Blue Boar, deserted these last forty years, will again become gay and busy.' The bicycle has done that now, at least in the Midlands, and the electric car, motor-car, and motor-cycle promise to carry still more interest to the rural districts by enabling people to live out of the din and smoke of the factory.

A CARINTHIAN TRAGEDY.

By the BARONESS VON GILSA.

'BROTHER JOHN!' said the Abbot, 'I am grieved, sorely grieved, to hear this of thee. I hoped my oft-repeated admonitions would have borne better fruit.'

The person to whom he spoke was a man of forbidding aspect, whose cunning eyes, peering from under their shaggy brows, glanced restlessly from face to face of those around him, seeking some escape from conviction, but manifesting no sign of penitence.

'I would fain admonish thee once more in private, my son,' pursued the Abbot gently, 'and bid thee by daily prayer and penance to wrestle with the evil spirit that leadeth thee astray—but alas! thou hast transgressed so often!'

'It is a grievous fault, father!' put in the sub-prior, an energetic young monk with stern, compressed lips, who stood scanning with keen eyes the face of the culprit; 'moreover, the transgression hath been an open one, and cannot be atoned by private penance; it is known to many of the community, and there are young brethren among us!—'

'True!' said the Abbot sadly. 'I must think of my duty to others, and the matter is clear, beyond all doubt; and yet it grieves me sorely. We must lay it before the Chapter to-morrow.'

The culprit was led out in sullen silence, the sub-prior bringing up the rear, after receiving the directions of his superior for the formal trial on the following day.

'A severe punishment and public rebuke may lead him back into the right path at last,' murmured the Abbot to himself as he paced slowly up and down. 'I would it were possible to cure sin by gentle means. Woe is me that I must wield the stern arm of justice!'

The cloud was still heavy on the old man's brow as he climbed a long stone staircase which led to a large bright room, the scriptorium of the monastery. It was usually filled with busy transcribers, for the library had been celebrated for generations; now, however, it had but one occupant; an elderly man, clad in the brown robe of the order, sat at a table drawn close to one of the windows; his head was bent over the vellum on which with slow and careful hand he was transcribing a precious manuscript, and so absorbed was he in his task that he never noticed

the Abbot's entrance till the latter sat down beside him.

'I have been sorely troubled, Brother Anthony,' said the superior. 'John the cook has been found at his old practices, seen by several of the brethren, and brought to me for public censure.'

The scribe looked up at the sad face beside him.

'That man mistook his vocation when he joined us; there will be neither peace nor order among us while he remains. It is well perhaps that he has broken the rule openly and must be judged by the Chapter.'

'Perhaps,' rejoined the other thoughtfully; 'we must not question the leadings of Providence. Yet I would it had not fallen to me to pronounce sentence on an erring brother!'

'My work is done for to-day,' said the scribe, after a short pause. Wiping and replacing his pen with solemn care, he turned back a page or two till he came to his last initial letter, and laid it before his friend as if to divert his thoughts to a more pleasant subject. It was a gem of mis-painting, and represented in its small compass a bird sitting on its nest among tall rushes, the little head turned sharply to one side, and the watchful eyes directed towards a corner where a child's hand was parting the reeds, and two little flaxen heads were pressed close together gazing at the creature; there was a stretch of calm water beyond, and a low range of green hills sloped gently from the farther bank. The Abbot uttered an exclamation of delighted surprise.

'How well I remember that evening!' he cried. 'It was you who discovered the nest and brought me to look at it on our way home.'

'And you who saved me from slipping into the water in my heedlessness,' said the scribe; 'yours was ever the guiding hand.'

'I remember too,' continued the Abbot, 'how your good father chid us for staying out so late, and meant to chastise us; but the Miller's Andreas came running in with the news that the fever had left his little sister, and the good man put up the rod, saying there should be no tears shed on the day on which God had restored a neighbour's child to life. Many a long year has passed, Brother Anthony, since then, since thou and I looked at that nest by the stream.'

'Five and forty years,' sighed the other, 'and all are gone now save you and I, who have been friends and brothers through all.'

'Friends till death,' said the Abbot, and the two old men joined hands and sat in silence for a while.

'The world was brighter then than it has ever been since,' he said presently, as if thinking aloud.

'But not so bright as it will be,' said Anthony, gazing through the western window. The gables and walls of the old town were dark, and a dim veil was creeping up the slopes and hollows on the hillsides; but the rocky peaks of the Dobratsch stood out sharp and clear against the sky, flushed with the sunset glory which melted softly away through shades of paling gold till it met the gray shadowy twilight.

'It shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light,' said the Abbot.

Just then the bell rang in the refectory, and

hand in hand the two old men went down the stairs.

'The pottage methinks has a bitter taste this evening,' said the Abbot, pushing away his unfinished meal, and leaning back wearily in his chair.

No one else seemed to find fault with the fare, but the ever-watchful sub-prior motioned to one of the novices to remove the dish in front of the superior, and whispered to him to place it carefully in his cell. Later, it was remembered that the Abbot sat, absorbed and careworn, resting his head on his hand, and that at evensong his voice faltered strangely, and his face was deadly pale. But all knew that he was sad at heart on account of the scandal in the monastery, and none gave heed to these symptoms, till at dead of night the whole community was aroused by the tidings that their superior had been seized with mortal pain, and every moment threatened to be his last. Dark suspicions were hinted against the culprit, who had been allowed to complete his labours in the kitchen that night before being removed to the cell where he was to await the morrow's trial. The corridors were thronged by agitated groups listening for fresh reports from the sick-room. Towards morning suspicion swelled to certainty; a dog which had eaten the remainder of the Abbot's supper lay dead in his kennel with unmistakable signs of mortal poison; the lay-brother who stood sentinel at the door of Brother John's cell had noticed a gleam of unchristian joy on his evil countenance when he heard of the Abbot's sickness. Another day found the sufferer weak and sorely spent, yet seeming likely to struggle back to life. The meeting of the Chapter, delayed by this untoward event, now assumed larger dimensions. The Bishop of Villach and the heads of all neighbouring monasteries were summoned to attend the solemn ceremony. It was no longer a question of convent discipline, but a matter of life and death.

The trial was a short one; many an evil deed and word were remembered against the accused, and not one voice bore testimony in his favour. He stood before them, stubborn, stolid, the personification of dogged impenitence, never even attempting to contradict his accusers. The case, bad as it was, was simple enough, the sentence unanimous: 'Let the culprit be walled-up forthwith in the deepest vault of the monastery, and let the record of his crime be buried with him.' At that awful moment one of the monks rose from his seat. It was Brother Anthony, pale and weary with long watching by the bed of his friend. In the name of the good Abbot, whose feet were still trembling on the brink of the unknown world, he pleaded for a more lenient sentence, for one more chance of penitence. The criminal's face changed, and his eyes glanced eagerly towards the speaker. But the Bishop, in measured tones, replied: 'This has been the sin of the parricide; he must share the parricide's doom,' and every voice but one murmured its assent. A sheet of parchment lay on the table, on which a scribe had written in Latin the minutes of the trial; to this the judges affixed their signatures, and left it to be laid at the feet of the wretched man when the sentence was

carried into execution. Then, in slow and solemn procession, they passed from the chapter-house. One loud, wild cry rang through the corridors, and the pale monks crossed themselves, repeating, 'Libera nos a malo.'

That evening the bell of St Blasius tolled long and loud, and a funeral mass was chanted in the lighted chapel. And then all was still. But the sentinels on the walls of the distant town noticed one lamp burning till dawn again brightened over the world. It was in the Abbot's chamber, where two gray-haired men prayed fervently for mercy to a parting soul.

It was a glorious summer morning in the year of grace 1852. A faint mist partially veiled the summit of the Dobratsch, hiding tenderly the rifts and scars in its abrupt sides; the peaks of the great Alps rose a snowy line against the deep blue sky. Birds sang in the woods, and swallows darted merrily across the clear still waters of the lake and round the old mud castle on its northern bank. The sun gleamed on the cross which crowned the tall tower of the church, and stole in through the high windows, lighting up the gilded altars and the huge tombs of departed Kevenhüllers. Two young gentlemen left the town of Villach, walking with the brisk step that characterises the Briton all the world over, and makes foreigners declare that the sons of Albion make even recreation a matter of business. They were going to explore the ruins of the great Abbey of St Blasius, and, by a détour to reach the little town of Velden in time to catch the steamer which was to take them down the lake.

'That was a gruesome story the landlord told us last night,' said the younger one. 'One reads of such things, but never expects to find traces of them in real life. Only fancy,' he went on, as they paused amid heaps of dust and rubbish, where here and there a fragment of carved stone showed that something better than a common dwelling-house had once stood there, 'perhaps just under our feet a human being was walled up in this little hole, and left to die by inches while his murderers feasted above him!'

'I wonder what his crime was?' said the other.

'Crime? Perhaps he knew too many secrets, and they put him out of the way. Perhaps he was a Reformer, and they feared his eloquence. Perhaps.'

'Perhaps he was a great rascal, and deserved his fate, horrible as it was,' interrupted his friend. 'Why are you always so hard on those monks of old?'

'And why are you always so ready to speak up for them?' was the retort.

'When I remember the books these old fellows saved for us in the dark ages I feel sure that there were more than ten righteous men in the city, let others say what they will.'

A party of noisy urchins were playing at a short distance among the ruins; one heap, larger than the others, was an imaginary castle, which they were besieging and defending by turns. Two sunburnt, ragged boys drew near to the speaker, each shyly nudging the other and trying to push him forward as spokesman.

'What do you want, my little fellow?' he asked good-naturedly.

Cham
Jul
'Pi
cut t
holdin
whic
you
soon
exclu
full
'W
'L
blow
would
corner
and
The
took
said,
brow
and
The
'F
us s
care
The
the
decis
yell
Hol
dus
Bro
sun
pea
the
pot
The
the
adj
be
the
sign
Wh
exe
A.L.

co
'th
ce
th
ne
in
to
Pi
or
sta
mu
cr
an
pu
an
of

'Please, sir, have you a knife? Will you cut this for me?' said the bigger of the two, holding out a large discoloured flap of something which looked like neither rag nor paper. The young man took out his knife, but he had no sooner touched the thing than he uttered an exclamation of surprise, and examined it carefully.

'Where did you find this, my boy?'

'Down there, sir, in the rubbish. It was blowing about, and Franz caught it and said it would make a famous flag if we tore a hole in one corner to put the string through, but none of us could tear it, though we tried very hard.'

The traveller put his knife in his pocket, and took out his purse instead. 'Look here, boys,' he said, dropping some zwanzigers into the hard brown palm, 'go and buy yourselves a real flag, and leave this with me.'

The urchins rushed off in wild delight.

'What treasure have you picked up?' asked his friend.

'A message from the dead,' was the reply; 'let us sit down in a quiet place, and make it out carefully.'

The little steamer started that morning without the travellers, who sat for hours on a stone bench deciphering the faded characters on the large yellow parchment. This was what they read:

'In the year of our Lord 1498, Gisbert of Hohenems being Bishop of Villach, and Sebaldus Abbot of the Monastery of St. Blasius, Brother John, cook in the said monastery, being summoned before the Chapter to answer to repeated and scandalous breaches of discipline, did, the night before his trial, mix poison with the pottage of the reverend father who now lieth at the point of death, in grievous bodily torment. The murderer, being tried in solemn conclave by the Bishop of Villach and the heads of seven adjacent monasteries, was by them condemned to be walled-up alive in the right-hand corner of the great western dungeon, a copy of the sentence, signed by all the judges, being placed at his feet. Which just and righteous judgment was duly executed on the night of the 14th November A.D. 1498.'

considered the favourite pastime of all those who live on the coasts of the Pacific; and amongst the expert anglers of New South Wales at all events ladies are happily admitted.

Many of the fish caught in Australian waters bear considerable resemblance to those with which home fish-eaters are familiar. The early settler when he caught a fish called it after that which he considered it most closely resembled. Alas! many of them, beyond the appearance, have but little of the flavour of the home article. The salmon of Europe has a representative in Australia, masquerading under his appearance and even adopting his name. But what a difference — *quantum mutatus ab illo!* The Australian article is flabby and insipid. He is a sorry pretender to the throne of the king of river-fishes. The trout or sea-trout is also an imitation which might well be labelled as being 'made in Germany.' The cod and rock-cod are good eating, but not equal to the originals. The mackerel is but a mackerel in name. As for herrings, we are told that immense shoals of these fish visit our coasts annually, but so far no means have been adopted to take them in.

The balance, however, does not lie wholly against us. There is a fish known as the Murray cod very similar in appearance, and with very much of the flavour and the flakiness of its northern congener. Being a native of the Antipodes, it is bound to be a little irregular—*outre* would be a better word. The irregularity of the Murray cod is that it is absolutely a fresh-water fish, while the cod at home is found only in the sea. It reaches a large size—say ten or twelve pounds—and is found plentifully in many of the large rivers of the southern colonies, among the inhabitants of which it is very highly esteemed.

The whiting is well represented along the coasts, where it delights to poke about the sandy shores just outside the long line of breakers. It can be caught with a line having an appropriate hook and bait thrown from the shore. It attains a size a shade larger than the whiting of Europe, but very much resembles it in appearance and in flesh. If not the real whiting, its Australian namesake is certainly a good imitation. The garfish—commonly called 'guard-fish'—is similar to, if not the same as 'the mackerel guide' of British waters, and is a peculiar fish with a long protruding under-jaw. It wanders in shoals, and can only be taken by special nets. It is one of the daintiest of Australian fish, and a general favourite for breakfast.

The most common of all the Australian fish, and, perhaps, those most easily caught, are mullets. In flesh and appearance these fish seem to be exactly the same as those found in home waters. In habit they are similar. Here they seem to be constantly in season. They are the staple food of the fish-eating inhabitants—a food to which our population can return when other fish have gone 'off.' They never answer to the allurements of rod and line, but are caught in vast quantities with nets in our lakes and tidal waters. The mullet, as we have said, is an all-round fish, although perhaps a little too rich for most palates unless cooked in a particular way. Next to the mullet in quantity are bream and black-fish. These are also taken by net, and vast quantities are sent daily to the

FISH AND FISHING IN AUSTRALIA.

THOSE who enjoy a fish-breakfast in the old country, and those who esteem fish mostly for 'the catching' they afford, can have little conception of the quantities of fish that abound round the Australian coasts. We must admit that neither salmon nor trout fishing exists anywhere in Greater Britain; neither does any equivalent to the sport with rod and line offer itself to Piscator. The fish in Australia are of a different order. The sport is of another cast. Notwithstanding the immense number of sharks that must be fed, the open sea teems with fish. Every creek, bay, river, lake, and lagoon seems actually to be alive with fish, which, although differing much from those species with which the good people at home are familiar, afford splendid sport and excellent eating at its conclusion. The national sport of Australia, like the national sport of England, is undoubtedly cricket, and after that again—cricket. Still fishing has some claim to be

metropolis of each colony. They generally inhabit the same lakes and are caught in the same nets as the mullet. The bream—generally pronounced 'brim'—though having much the appearance of the British sea-bream, belongs to a distinct family. The Australian variety grows up to three pounds or even five pounds weight, but fish that are not quite so heavy are generally more highly appreciated. The species called silver bream is that which is most esteemed.

The king of Australian fishes is undoubtedly the schnapper. We speak not now of the trumpeter of Tasmania nor of the blue cod of New Zealand, about which the inhabitants of these colonies are not unnaturally proud. Judging by his shape, the schnapper is an ugly fish. His colour is good, but his proportions are not fair, as he lies on the slab of the fishmonger. On your first introduction to a ten-pound schnapper on the end of your line he strikes you as an interesting acquaintance of whom you would like to know more. On your subsequent intimacy at table you forget much of his unsightliness. He is, however, gibbous and unsymmetrical, having a strange lump on his head, which gives him a startled appearance. This fish is always caught with rod and line, and the manner of his taking is peculiar.

The home of the schnapper is in the deep sea, generally a considerable distance from the shore and in the immediate neighbourhood of a shelving reef. Good schnapper-fishing may, however, be had from the rocks of the mainland or an island. Every holiday in Sydney there are hundreds who go forth to fish for schnapper. For this purpose it is usual to club funds and charter a small steamer. By this means the expense is lessened, while the party is made more enjoyable. The bait is usually the flesh of mullet or other fish cut up. When the boat has arrived at the fishing-ground selected, steam is shut off, and the vessel allowed to drift with the tide or wind. Then the hooks are baited, and the lines cast forth, the fishers occupying the side opposite to the drift of the vessel. When the conditions are favourable, a large harvest is usually the result, as schnapper bite very freely. There are two or three hooks on each line, and it is no uncommon sight to see every line coming in with each hook holding a schnapper. This is real fun; and may last any time from ten minutes to two or three hours. When the school of fish has passed, the steamer will generally shift to other quarters. When two holidays come together, schnapper-parties are in vogue in Sydney. As in the winter season we have the calmest weather, as a rule, it is no unusual sight to see our amateur fishermen returning on Saturday or Sunday evening with hundreds and hundreds of fish. Most of the take is presented to friends, but many of them find their way to Woolloomooloo, wherein lies the Billingsgate of Sydney. We have only regarded the amateur so far, but there are many others who, going forth in all sorts of craft, depend upon schnapper-fishing as a means of increasing their livelihood.

The fish of Australia have one or two peculiarities which are worth noting. Many of them are fantastic. Most of them are brilliantly coloured. The rock-cod is a beautiful pink with a sheen not unlike that of plush or velvet as he dies. The

nangai is almost scarlet. The maori has light-blue patches interspersed through vivid tints, like the tattooed face of the aboriginal of New Zealand. The sergeant-baker is well named. He wears the gaudy uniform of a most distinguished recruiting officer. Another peculiarity of the Australian fish is the quantity of spines in which they are arrayed, and with which they may defend themselves. The beautiful rock-cod is a perfect demon for spines, as are most of the others. Indeed the fishermen of Australia must needs be cautious, or a bad wound for weeks afterwards may remind him unpleasantly of his holiday.

Before closing may we be pardoned for mentioning the oyster? This delicious mollusc is of two kinds—the mud-oyster and the rock-oyster. The former grows to a larger size, but the rock-oyster is more generally esteemed for flavour. Their names indicate their place of growth. The rock-oyster loves the beds and adjoining rocks of tidal streams. They grow in clusters, in a variety of shapes and sizes, and each cluster is attached to something solid. Here they are alternately bathed in salt water and in fresh or brackish. They are also left for hours high and dry until the incoming tide refreshes them. Nor do these oysters always select rocks on which to dwell. This accommodating mollusc may frequently be found adhering to the roots and lower branches of the mangrove and other trees which delight in a sort of submarine residence. It is doubtless to this peculiarity that the sailor referred when he wrote to his mother at home, telling the old lady, and not untruly, that in Australia oysters grow on trees.

Many other edible fishes are plentiful in Australian waters, but we think we have enumerated the most prominent of the number.

VILLANELLE.

THE past is o'er—
Waste not thy days in vain regret :
Grieve thou no more.

Look now before
And not behind thee ; do not fret—
The past is o'er.

Thy pain is sore
And thou hast cause for sorrow, yet
Grieve thou no more.

Close Memory's door—
That day is dead, that sun has set—
The past is o'er.

There is in store
For thee still happy days. Forget !
Grieve thou no more.

Smile as of yore—
No longer let thine eyes be wet.
The past is o'er.

Grieve thou no more !

M. H. W.